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ABSTRACT

County demographic records and the voluntary responses of 80 Chicanas to a questionnaire and a self-concept examination were analyzed to identify the patterns, problems, and dynamics in the lives of divorced Northern New Mexico Chicanas. The women, half of whom were divorced and most of whom were Roman Catholics, were from urban Bernalillo County and non-urban San Miguel County. Chicano divorce rates were lower than expected in both places. Eighty percent of the non-urban divorced women, 79% of the urban divorced women, and 60% of the married women received salaries. Among divorced women, 50% earned less than $5000/year and 52.2% received no child support. Most additional financial support came from the families of non-urban divorced women and from the friends of their urban counterparts. Emotional support from the Church was important to all divorced women. Non-urban non-custodial parents (fathers) visited their children more often than urban fathers, but visitation rates for both groups exceeded national averages. The self concepts of the four groups of women were remarkably similar. Chicano culture, the influence of the Church, and a non-urban setting may inhibit the divorce rate. (SB)

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THE DIVORCED CHICANA OF NORTHERN NEW MEXICO

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THE DIVORCED CHICANA OF NOTHERN NEW MEXICO

The Divorced Chicana

There are 3 million Chicanas living in the United States. Eighty-five percent of them live in the Southwest, and 85% of them live in urban areas. Six point six percent of the Chicana population was a part of the divorced population in 1978, as opposed to 7.1% of the general population. The Chicano male's divorce rate was 3.5%.

The Chicano population is the fastest growing minority in the United States. If for no other reasons than the divorce rate and the volume of this population, an investigation is warranted. The Chicana population is generally financially and educationally below national and state norms. This would have implications as to the quality of life for this population and their dependents.

Specific Statement of Problem

This study was undertaken as an attempt to gain insight into the patterns, problems, and dynamics operant in the lives of the divorced Chicana utilizing the following procedure:

1. The investigation of county demographic records pertaining to the Chicano population.

2. Personal data collected from a General Information Questionnaire.

3. An examination of the self-concept of the Chicano divorced woman utilizing an instrument developed specifically for this purpose.

The purpose of this study is to collect data that will facilitate the identification of patterns, problems, and dynamics operant in the lives of the divorced Chicano female of New Mexico utilizing San Miguel and Bernalillo County Demographic records, a General Information Questionnaire, and a Self-Concept Inventory.

Description of the Study

The population consisted of 80 Chicanas who reside in Northern New Mexico. Forty of this population were divorced and 40 were married. Twenty married women and 20 divorced women resided in a non-urban environment (San Miguel County) and 20 married women and 20 divorced women were from an urban environment (Bernalillo County). The main body of this population was comprised of volunteers from groups of parents whose children were preparing to receive First Communion from the Roman Catholic Church.

While meeting in their respective parishes, they were asked to complete the Questionnaire and Self-Concept Inventory. Those participants that were not members of the above groups were solicited from within the physical boundaries of the 2 parishes, with the exception of 4 divorced women and 2 married women from Bernalillo County.

Presentation of Findings

The amount of data which this study produced was much greater than had been anticipated, both in the nature of: (1) demographic data which became a part of the computer product, and (2) the massive self-concept data that still needs to be programmed into the total computer program and analyzed. Thus, those items that are supported by sufficient data upon which to draw conclusions and make implications shall be reported. The remainder of the data is available and will be reported in the form of an amendment to this paper.

Data from the 1979 Divorce Records

Chi square was utilized to determine how the divorce rates in Bernalillo and San Miguel counties compare to the national norms.

TABLE 1

CHI SQUARE ON 1979 DIVORCE DATA FOR BERNALILLO AND SAN MIGUEL COUNTIES

	Observed	Expected	D	X2
Non-Urban, Non-Chicano	15	33	18	9.8
Non-Urban Chicano	33	147	114	88.4
Urban-Chicano	914	1241	327	86.2
Urban Non-Chicano	2312	1853	459	113.2

Chi Square significant beyond .01 X2 = 298.1

Table 1 exhibits several patterns utilizing the above procedure for projection; 147 divorces would have been expected within the construct of the non-urban Chicano population for 1979. In actuality, there were 33, a lower figure than would have been anticipated. The non-urban, non-Chicano had an incident of 15 divorces with an expected incidence of 33, which is significantly less than the expected figure.

The urban Chicano population recorded 914 divorces with an expectation of 1,241 divorces. Again, the rate of divorce is less than the expected. The urban non-Chicano divorces were 2,312, with an expected figure of 1,853. This is the only segment of the four populations with a divorce rate higher than the anticipate figure. The divorce pattern for both populations in the non-urban environment is less than the expected rate. In the urban environment, the divorce rate for Chicanas was lower than would have been predicted, but higher than the non-urban Chicanas divorce rate.

TABLE 2

CHURCH ATTENDANCE ON PERCENTS

Reponse Categories	Non-Urban Married	Non-Urban Divorced	Urban Divorced	Urban Married
Yes	75	60	25	75
No	5	10	15	10
Sometimes	15	25	60	15

The married population in both settings shows a similar pattern of church attendance, 75% of both, urban and non-urban, attended church with regularity and 15% reported attending occasionally.

Of the two divorced groups, the non-urban respondents reported a higher rate of church attendance than the urban. Sixty percent of the non-urban reported attending church with regularity, while 25% indicated that they "sometimes" attend. The urban divorced pattern presented a converse pattern with 25% reporting that they attend regularly and 60% reporting that they attend "sometimes". The figures for those who never attended ranged from 5% (non-urban) to 15% (urban). The 15% represents the urban divorced population. Married women, urban and non-urban, attend church with the greatest regularity, followed by non-urban divorced women and last, the urban divorced woman. (Table 2)

TABLE 3

EMPLOYMENT

Response Categories	Non-Urban Married	Non-Urban Divorced	Urban Divorced	Urban Married
Yes	60	80	70	60
No	40	10	25	40
Not Reported	--	10	5	--
TOTALS	100	100	100	100

There is an identical pattern for married women, urban and non-urban, in the area of employment outside the home. Sixty percent of the married women are salaried and 40% do not work outside the home. Whereas, 80% of the non-urban divorced population works outside the home. Of the urban divorced women, 70% reported salaried positions, while 25% worked only in the home. (Table 3)

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGES OF THE NUMBER OF YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION

Response Categories	Non-Urban Married	Non-Urban Divorced	Urban Divorced	Urban Married
0- 5 years	10	60	5	30
6-10 years	25	15	45	5
11-15 years	5	5	5	5
16-20 years	5	5	5	0
Missing	55	15	40	60
TOTALS	100	100	100	100

Fifty-five percent of the non-urban married population, and 60% of the urban married population did not respond to this item. It is interesting to note that although the non-urban divorced woman is the most frequently employed, 60% of that work force has a tenure of less than 5 years.

Eighty percent of the non-urban divorced population works outside the home. Of the urban divorced women, 70% reported salaried positions, while 25% worked only in the home. Of the 60% of the urban divorced women that responded, 50% had employment tenure of 6-15 years. This is the greatest collective tenure for any of the four groups. The work tenure of the divorced Chicana appears to be more stable than that of the married woman. (Table 4)

TABLE 5

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

Response Categories	Non-Urban Married	Non-Urban Divorced	Urban Divorced	Urban Married
8			10	5
9				
10		5	5	10
11			20	10
12	40	30	35	70
13		5		
14			15	
15				
16	10	10		
17				
18	5	15	5	
Missing	40	30	5	5
TOTALS	95	95	95	100

The data in Table 5 indicates that both the married and divorced non-urban setting have achieved a higher level of education than their counterparts in the urban setting. Twenty-five percent of the urban married did not complete high school, where as about 15% of the non-urban have gone beyond high school. In the divorced groups, the non-urban report 35% between grades 10 and 12, and 35% have gone beyond high school. The urban divorced show 70% between grades 10 and 12 with 35% completing grade 12.

TABLE 6

CHILD SUPPORT

Response Categories	Non-Urban Married	Non-Urban Divorced	Urban Divorced	Urban Married
Yes	Not	30	50	Not
No	applicable	60	45	applicable
Missing		10	5	

Thirty percent of the non-urban and 50% of the urban divorced Chicano women with children, received child support with some degree of regularity. Sixty percent of the non-urban and 45% of the urban divorced Chicana women received no child support, which indicates that over 50% (52.5%) of the forty Chicana divorced women represented received no child support. (Table 6)

TABLE 7

INCOME LEVELS

Response Categories	Non-Urban Married	Non-Urban Divorced	Urban Divorced	Urban Married
0-2,999		40	20	
3,000-5,000		15	30	
6,000-8,000		10	20	
9,000-10,000		5	10	
11,000-15,000		20	5	
15,000-17,000		10	15	
Missing	60%			85%

The married women did not respond in a quanity that would provide sufficient data to establish patterns. All of the divorced women responded and reported that over 50% of that population receive less than $5,000 annually. Thirty percent of the non-urban divorced Chicano women earn between $11,000 and $17,000 as do 20% of the urban population. No member of the population earned over $17,000 annually. (Table 7)

TABLE 8

CHILD VISITATION BY
NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT

Response Categories	Non-Urban Married	Non-Urban Divorced	Urban Divorced	Urban Married
Weekly		50	20	
Monthly		30	50	
Several Times a year		10	15	
Missing		10	15	

In Table 8, 80% of the non-custodial parents (fathers) were reported, by non-urban divorced Chicanos, as visiting their children either weekly or monthly. Fifty percent make weekly visitations. Seventy percent of the urban Chicano divorced women reported that the 70% of the non-custodial parents (fathers) visited their children weekly or montly, 20% visit weekly and 50% monthly. Not one of the forty reported that the non-custodial parent never visited.

TABLE 9

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID FOR
THE CHICANO DIVORCED WOMAN
(Other than Income)

Source	Non-Urban	Urban
Parents	35	15
Family	15	15
Friends	10	35
Church	5	0
Agencies	15	15
Department of Health Services	20	5
Others	0	5
Missing		10

The non-urban Chicano divorced woman receives financial aid (excluding income) primarily from her parents, (35%) and other family members, (15%) organizations, (agencies, church, Department of Human Services), account for 40%. The remaining 10% comes from friends. The urban divorced Chicano woman receives her largest contribution from friends (35%), and 15% from parents and 15% from family. Organizations account for 20%; 15% from agencies and 5% from the Department of Human Services. Of the forty divorced women, thirty-eight responded with a source of financial aid and two did not respond at all (Table 9).

TABLE 10

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SOURCES REPORTED
BY THE CHICANO DIVORCED WOMAN

Source	Non-Urban Divorced	Urban Divorced
Parent(s)	4	2
Family	9	2
Friends	10	6
Church	14	6
Agency	4	3
Other		0
TOTALS	41	14

The urban Chicano divorced woman's main source of support were friend(s) (6), and Church (6). Other was selected (3) times, parent(s) (2) and family (2) were the least selected items. (Table 10)

TABLE 11

DATA FROM SELF-CONCEPT INVENTORY

Non-Urban Married	Non-Urban Divorced	Urban Divorced	Urban Married
5.4	5.8	5.2	5.1

The instrument was on a continuum of 1-7, with 4 as the median score on the self-concept scale, "How Do You See Yourself?." There was only a .7 range in the mean scores of the four populations. The non-urban Chicano divorced woman scored highest with a score of 5.8 and in descending order of numerical scores, 5.4 for the non-urban married, 5.2 for the urban divorced, and 5.1 for the urban married. The non-urban population scored .9 higher than the urban population. The divorced women in both populations scored only slightly higher than the married population.

Divorced women scored .8 higher in the area of self-esteem and .72 higher in the area of self-confidence with the urban married woman perceiving herself as the least self-confident (4.7). The non-urban population saw themselves as more assertive (1.00) than the urban population. All four populations saw themselves as honest (6.1), which was the highest collective score. The divorced urban woman saw herself as the least capable as a leader (3.9). The non-urban population perceived themselves as more outgoing (.8) and the urban woman saw herself as the least moral (4.85) as opposed to the divorced non-urban (5.95). All four populations saw themselves as affectionate, fair and friendly.

The divorced non-urban woman saw herself as the most independent (6.1), while the divorced urban woman saw herself as the least independent (4.8).

Findings

General Information Questionnaire

1. Non-urban Chicano divorced women are more apt to attend church regularly than urban Chicano divorced women.

2. Seventy-five percent of the divorced Chicano women are employed outside the home.

3. Urban divorced women have the greatest work tenure.

4. The non-urban populations (married-divorced) have the highest collective education levels, but 20% of the urban divorced Chicano women have post high school class work as do 25% of the non-urban divorced Chicano women. Only 15% of the non-urban and none of the urban Chicano married population have post high school class work.

5. Fifty percent of the Chicano divorced women do not receive child support.

6. Over 50% of the Chicano divorced women earn less than $5,000. annually.

7. Seventy-five percent of the non-custodial fathers see their children weekly or monthly.

8. The non-urban divorced Chicano woman is most apt to receive financial aid from parents or family whereas, the urban divorced chicano woman is most apt to receive financial aid from friends.

The non-urban divorced Chicano woman is most apt to receive emotional support from:

a. Church
b. Parents
c. Family
d. Friends

The urban divorced Chicano woman is most apt to receive emotional support from:

a. Friends
b. Church

Self-Concept

There is very little difference between the self-concept of the divorced Chicana and the married Chicana. Those differences, which do occur, appear to suggest that women from the non-urban area have a higher self-concept than those from the urban area, and; that divorced women from a given locale, a slightly higher self-concept than the married woman from the same locale.

Demographics

Refer to Table 1 on page 3.

Conclusions

Demographics

The Chicano divorce rate for Bernalillo and San Miguel Counties were significantly lower than the national average for the year 1979. It would appear that there are two apparent factors which may inhibit the anticipated rate of divorce among three of the four populations being studied:

1. Geographical location--non-urban, and

2. The ethnic classification as a Chicano in Bernalillo and San Miguel Counties.

Implications

1. The influence of the Chicano culture may inhibit the acceleration of the present divorce rate.

2. The Roman Catholic Church may be a determining factor.

General Information (Questionnaire)

All eighty women of the population of this study were members of the Catholic Church. Consequently, it might be supposed that the church attendance of this group might be higher than Chicano women selected at random from the same communities. The Catholic Church was also percieved by the divorced Chicana as a primary source of emotional support. Eighty-five percent of the participants attended church with a degree of regularity varying from occasionally to regularly. An investigation of the effects of the values and practices of the Catholic Church upon the attitude and behaviors of the divorced Chicana might be appropriate.

The greatest deviation from the national divorce patterns concerned child visitation by the non-custodial parent (father). Seventy-five percent of the non-custodial parents see their children weekly or monthly.

This figure is considerably above the national average. Current research in the area of non-custodial parent visitation indicates that those children that are effected the least by divorce, are those children who have an ongoing relationship with the non-custodial parent, and who see their parent at assigned frequent intervals. It would appear that the majority of the children of the divorced population of this study fits this category. Frequent visitation by the non-custodial parent (father) also provides a male role model. One might speculate that the following are contributing factors in this phenomena.

1. The non-custodial parent appears to remain within commuting distance of the custodial parent.

2. There may be pressures, of an overt or covert nature, placed upon the non-custodial parent by the extended family and/or the community to maintain contact with the minor children of a former marriage.

Behaviors represented by interactions with the community and methods of meeting dependency needs indicate a cultural influence upon the divorced Chicana. The values and behaviors of the Chicano community and the extended family appear to be in evidence in this study and warrant further investigation.

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